

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. 1. A method for making a payment to a payee on behalf of a payor, comprising:
  2. receiving a payment request for a payment service provider to pay a payee on behalf of a payor;
  3. identifying those of a plurality of risk reduction techniques available for fulfilling the received payment request based upon the received payment request;
  4. selecting an identified available risk reduction technique; and
  5. effecting payment in accordance with the selected risk reduction technique.

1. 2. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of risk reduction techniques protects against financial loss to the payment service provider in effecting payment on behalf of the payor.

1. 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of risk reduction techniques includes at least two of i) determining, prior to directing funds to the payee in association with effecting payment, that payor funds are available, ii) determining, prior to directing funds to the payee in association with effecting payment, that an entity is available from which to collect funds if funds cannot be collected from the payor in association with effecting the payment, iii) determining

7 whether payment to the payee will be drawn on a deposit account associated  
8 with the payor, or drawn on a deposit account associated with an entity other  
9 than the payor, and iv) directing funds to the payee a predetermined period of  
10 time subsequent to initiating an electronic debiting of a deposit account  
11 associated with the payor.

1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the selected risk reduction technique is  
2 the determining that payor funds are available, and further comprising:  
3 transmitting an electronic funds transfer file to debit the payor deposit  
4 account and to credit a deposit account associated with the service provider;  
5 transmitting a confirmation request to a financial institution at which at  
6 least one of the payor deposit account and service provider deposit account is  
7 maintained subsequent to transmitting the electronic funds transfer file,; and  
8 receiving a response to the transmitted confirmation request from the  
9 financial institution;  
10 wherein the transmitted confirmation request requests one of i)  
11 confirmation that the payor deposit account has been successfully debited, or ii)  
12 confirmation that the service provider deposit account has been successfully  
13 credited;  
14 wherein the received response indicates one of i) a successful debiting of  
15 the payor deposit account, or ii) a successful crediting of the service provider  
16 deposit account; and

17       wherein the payment to the payee is effected responsive to receipt of the  
18    response, the payment drawn on the service provider deposit account.

1    5.    The method of claim 3, wherein the selected risk reduction technique is  
2    the determining that an entity is available from which to collect funds if funds  
3    cannot be collected from the payor in association with effecting the payment, and  
4    further comprising:

5       identifying the entity from which to collect funds if funds cannot be  
6    collected from the payor in association with directing the payment to the payee  
7    on behalf of the payor;

8       wherein the payment is effected responsive to the identification of the  
9    entity;

10       wherein the payment is drawn on a deposit account associated with the  
11    payment service provider; and

12       wherein the identified entity is one of the payee and a consumer service  
13    provider       with       which       the       payor       is       associated.

1    6.    The method of claim 3, wherein the selected risk reduction technique is  
2    the determining whether payment to the payee will be drawn on a deposit  
3    account associated with the payor, or drawn on a deposit account associated  
4    with an entity other than the payor, and further comprising:

5       determining at least one of i) if a monetary amount of the payment request  
6    is less than a predetermined first threshold, ii) if a total monetary amount of

7 payments completed on behalf of the payor within a first predetermined time  
8 period is less than a predetermined second threshold, and iii) if a volume of  
9 payments completed on behalf of the payor within a second predetermined time  
10 period is less than a predetermined third threshold;  
11 wherein, if it is determined that the monetary amount is less than the first  
12 threshold, that the total monetary amount is less than the second threshold, or  
13 that the volume is less than the third threshold, effecting payment includes  
14 issuing one of a check or an electronic funds transfer to the payee drawn on a  
15 deposit account associated with an entity other than the payor; and  
16 wherein, if it is determined that the monetary amount is not less than the  
17 first threshold, that the total monetary amount is not less than the second  
18 threshold, or that the volume is not less than the third threshold, effecting  
19 payment includes issuing a draft to the payee drawn on the payor deposit  
20 account.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the identification of each of those of the  
2 plurality of risk reduction techniques is based upon at least one of i) the identity  
3 of the payor, ii) the identity of the payee, iii) the identity a financial institution at  
4 which the payor maintains a deposit account, iv) the identity of a consumer  
5 service provider with which the payor is associated, and v) a type of payment  
6 service offered by the payment service provider utilized by the payor.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein two or more of the plurality of risk  
2 reduction techniques are identified as being available, and further comprising:  
3 determining the one of the two or more identified risk reduction techniques  
4 which provides a highest level of protection against financial loss to the payment  
5 service provider in association with effecting payment on behalf of the payor;  
6 wherein the determined one of the risk reduction techniques is the  
7 selected risk reduction technique.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein two or more of the plurality of risk  
2 reduction techniques are identified as being available, and further comprising:  
3 determining the one of the two or more identified risk reduction techniques  
4 that is associated with a least cost;  
5 wherein the determined one of the risk reduction techniques is the  
6 selected risk reduction technique.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein two or more of the plurality of risk  
2 reduction techniques are identified as being available, and further comprising:  
3 determining the one of the two or more identified risk reduction techniques  
4 associated with a shortest time period to complete payment to the payee on  
5 behalf of the payor;  
6 wherein the determined one of the risk reduction techniques is the  
7 selected risk reduction technique.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of risk reduction  
2 techniques is associated with a priority and two or more of the plurality of risk  
3 reduction techniques are identified as being available, and further comprising:  
4       determining the one of the two or more identified risk reduction techniques  
5       having a highest priority;  
6       wherein the determined one of the risk reduction techniques is the  
7 selected risk reduction technique.

1 12. A system for making a payment to a payee on behalf of a payor,  
2 comprising:  
3       a communications interface configured to receive a payment request for a  
4 payment service provider to pay a payee on behalf of a payor; and  
5       a processor configured to i) identify those of a plurality of risk reduction  
6 techniques available for fulfilling the received payment request based upon the  
7 received payment request, ii) select an identified available risk reduction  
8 technique, and iii) cause payment to the payee on behalf of the payor to be  
9 effected in accordance with the selected risk reduction technique.

1 13. The system of claim 12, wherein each of the plurality of risk reduction  
2 techniques protects against financial loss to the payment service provider in  
3 effecting payment on behalf of the payor.

1 14. The system of claim 12, wherein the plurality of risk reduction techniques  
2 includes at least two of i) determining, prior to directing funds to the payee in  
3 association with effecting payment, that payor funds are available in a deposit  
4 account associated with the payor prior to directing a payment, ii) determining,  
5 prior to directing funds to the payee in association with effecting payment, that an  
6 entity is available from which to collect funds if funds cannot be collected from  
7 the payor in association with effecting the payment, iii) determining whether  
8 payment to the payee will be drawn on a deposit account associated with the  
9 payor, or drawn on a deposit account associated with an entity other than the  
10 payor, and iv) directing funds to the payee a predetermined period of time  
11 subsequent to initiating an electronic debiting of a deposit account associated  
12 with the payor.

1 15. The system of claim 14, wherein:  
2 the selected risk reduction technique is the determining that payor funds  
3 are available;  
4 the communications interface is further configured to i) transmit an  
5 electronic funds transfer file to debit the payor deposit account and to credit a  
6 deposit account associated with the service provider, ii) transmit a confirmation  
7 request to a financial institution at which at least one of the payor deposit account  
8 and service provider deposit account is maintained, and iii) receive a response,  
9 from the financial institution, that payor funds in at least an amount of the  
10 payment request are available;

11           the processor is further configured to i) cause the communications  
12 interface to transmit the electronic funds transfer file, ii) cause the  
13 communications interface to transmit the confirmation request subsequent to  
14 causing the transmission of the electronic funds transfer file, and ii) cause  
15 payment to be effected responsive to the receipt of the response;

16           the transmitted confirmation request requests one of i) confirmation that  
17 the payor deposit account has been successfully debited, or ii) confirmation that  
18 the service provider deposit account has been successfully credited;

19           the received response indicates one of i) a successful debiting of the  
20 payor deposit account, and ii) a successful crediting of the service provider  
21 deposit account; and

22           the payment is drawn on the service provider deposit account.

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1 16. The system of claim 14, wherein:

2           the selected risk reduction technique is the determining that an entity is  
3 available from which to collect funds if funds cannot be collected from the payor  
4 in association with directing a payment on behalf of the payor;

5           the processor is further configured to i) identify the entity from which to  
6 collect funds if funds cannot be collected from the payor in association with  
7 directing the payment to the payee on behalf of the payor, and ii) to cause the  
8 payment to be effected responsive to the identification of the entity;

9           the payment is drawn on a deposit account associated with the payment  
10 service provider; and

11           the identified entity is one of the payee and a consumer service provider  
12          with which the payor is associated.

1   17.   The system of claim 14, wherein:  
2           the selected risk reduction technique is the determining whether payment  
3          to the payee will be drawn on a deposit account associated with the payor, or  
4          drawn on a deposit account associated with an entity other than the payor;  
5           the processor is further configured to determine at least one of i) if a  
6          monetary amount of the payment request is less than a predetermined first  
7          threshold, ii) if a total monetary amount of payments completed on behalf of the  
8          payor within a first predetermined time period is less than a predetermined  
9          second threshold, and iii) if a volume of payments completed on behalf of the  
10         payor within a second predetermined time period is less than a predetermined  
11         third threshold;  
12           if it is determined that the monetary amount is less than the first threshold,  
13          that the total monetary amount is less than the second threshold, or that the  
14          volume is less than the third threshold, effecting payment includes issuing one of  
15          a check or an electronic funds transfer to the payee drawn on a deposit account  
16          associated with an entity other than the payor; and  
17           if it is determined that the monetary amount is not less than the first  
18          threshold, that the total monetary amount is not less than the second threshold,  
19          or that the volume is not less than the third threshold, effecting payment includes  
20          issuing a draft to the payee drawn on the payor deposit account.

1 18. The system of claim 12, wherein the processor is further configured to  
2 identify each of those of the plurality of risk reduction techniques identified based  
3 upon at least one of i) the identity of the payor, ii) the identity of the payee, iii) the  
4 identity a financial institution at which the payor maintains a deposit account, iv)  
5 the identity of a consumer service provider with which the payor is associated,  
6 and v) a type of payment service offer by the payment service provider utilized by  
7 the payor.

1 19. The system of claim 12, wherein:  
2 two or more of the plurality of risk reduction techniques are identified as  
3 being available; and  
4 the processor is further configured to i) determine the one of the two or  
5 more identified risk reduction techniques which provides a highest level of  
6 protection against financial loss to the payment service provider in association  
7 with effecting payment on behalf of the payor, and ii) select the determined one  
8 of the risk reduction techniques.

1 20. The system of claim 12, wherein:  
2 two or more of the plurality of risk reduction techniques are identified as  
3 being available; and  
4 the processor is further configured to i) determine the one of the two or  
5 more identified risk reduction techniques that is associated with a least cost, and  
6 ii) select the determined one of the risk reduction techniques.

1 21. The system of claim 12, wherein:

2 two or more of the plurality of risk reduction techniques are identified as  
3 being available; and

4 the processor is further configured to i) determine the one of the two or  
5 more identified risk reduction techniques associated with a shortest time period  
6 to complete payment to the payee on behalf of the payor, and ii) select the  
7 determined one of the risk reduction techniques.

1 22. The system of claim 12, wherein:

2 each of the plurality of risk reduction techniques is associated with a  
3 priority;

4 two or more of the plurality of risk reduction techniques are identified as  
5 being available; and

6 the processor is further configured to i) determine the one of the two or  
7 more identified risk reduction techniques having a highest priority, and ii) select  
8 the determined one of the risk reduction techniques.